

## CONSUMER ALERT

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 13, 2004

#### **ANOTHER "GOVERNMENT GRANTS" SCAM HITS NORTH DAKOTA**

BISMARCK – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem today issued a Cease and Desist Order against a St. George, Utah business, Your Choice Credit Solutions doing business as Guide to Government Grants, for fraudulent solicitations and violations of the Do Not Call laws.

The business, which appears to operate under several different names, has been soliciting North Dakota consumers, promising that those who pay a \$250 processing fee will receive a grant of \$8,000 to \$25,000.

Stenehjem is concerned about the company's methods of solicitation. One consumer has reported abusive conduct by a telemarketer and repeated attempts to obtain personal financial information such as checking account numbers.

Stenehjem stated, "We've seen this scam before. These outfits often harvest financial information from unwitting consumers who later find unauthorized withdrawals from their checking accounts. If the consumers receive anything at all, it is typically only booklets containing information readily available at the public library."

In addition, Your Choice Credit Solutions called telephone subscribers who have signed up for the Do Not Call list, in violation of the state's Do Not Call law.

The Cease and Desist Order prohibits the business from conducting future solicitations in North Dakota. Violations of the order will subject the business to civil penalties up to \$3,000 per violation. The solicitations also may be violations of the consumer fraud law and could result in civil penalties up to \$5,000 per violation.

"Anyone receiving one of these calls should not agree to purchase and should not, under any circumstances, provide bank account or other personal information," warned Stenehjem.

Consumers who are solicited by this business, or for any other government grants program, should contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division toll free at 1-800-472-2600.

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